

Summary Notes
2002 Regional Forum on WIA Reauthorization
Los Angeles, CA

April 17, 2002

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration scheduled a series of public forums in March - May 2002 to hear comments on issues related to the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The Region 6 forum was held on April 17, 2002 at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel at Los Angeles Airport (LAX). A total of 178 participants attended and 24 participants made comments. Also in attendance were representatives from ETA's Regional and National Office and staff from Technical Assistance and Training Corporation (TATC).

The session was introduced as follows:

- **Welcome and Introductions**
Armando Quiroz, Regional Administrator, Region 6
Employment and Training Administration

W. Walter Liang, Secretary's Representative, Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
- **Overview of Reauthorization Issues and Process**
Ray Uhalde, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Employment and Training Administration
- **Explanation of Public Comment Process**
Ed Trumbull, TATC Facilitator

Ed Trumbull moderated the public comment session that followed. Pre-registered speakers were invited to present their comments first. Initially the number of pre-registered speakers was more than enough to fill the allotted time period. However, because not all pre-registered speakers were present, additional speakers who registered during on-site registration were able to present their comments.

24 speakers presented oral comments, some of whom submitted written comments to supplement their presentations. The summary below only considers the oral comments recorded during the forum. Written testimony submitted by presenters will be summarized in the final report to be submitted at a later date.

The comments are categorized according to the topics in the *Discussion Guide: WIA Reauthorization Issues*, followed by additional topics addressed, as follows:

- I. Business Engagement
- II. Governance/State Flexibility
- III. Linking WIA with TANF and other Partner Programs
- IV. One-Stop Career Centers

- V. Unemployment Insurance/Employment Service Reform and the One-Stop System
- VI. Improved Opportunities for Training
- VII. Other Comments

I. Business Engagement

- Businesses, as customers, need to feel that it is worth their time and effort to participate on the WIB and with the Workforce Development System. One example of a successful training program developed in collaboration with businesses is one with the Bank of America. This program successfully moved welfare recipients to bank employment. However, it took over 12 months to get all the training elements identified and in place. Currently, LA City is developing a training matrix for health industry careers. It is anticipated that it will take about 12 months to get employers, trainers, and educators in agreement on what training will be necessary to prepare people for specific jobs and implement that training. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The system can encourage greater active employer involvement in Local WIBs by reducing the size of the Boards. Perhaps this could occur by making non-mandatory members ex-officio, non-voting members. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Employers are critical about continued work and welfare reform and need to be invited to the table and allowed to set expectations for system program development. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*

II. Governance/State Flexibility

Employer Engagement in Workforce Investment System

- Businesses will continue to participate if we limit paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles; loosen restrictions for the eligible training providers; allow rapid response funding to be used for customized training programs; require that programs and funding promote and reward performance for customized training, on-the-job training, and incumbent worker training; and focus on the sectors initiatives to help advance systems change and achieve results. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- A method to encourage greater active employer involvement could be to grant authority to committees such as executive committees or management councils. This would reduce a larger Board's focus on administration and contracting duties and increase their focus on policy and on building policies and services that meet business needs. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Infrastructure in California is best handled on a regional basis and should be examined. The current WIB designation and delivery system is not congruent with real labor markets, customer commute patterns, and employer service or market areas. The

multiplicity of Local WIBs inhibits engagements. It is difficult to participate in a balkanized system. Employers do not care how the complicated system works. They just want easy One-Stop access to workers and services. *Public Postsecondary Education*

- Our business directors are engaged and active. They ensure that the One-Stops and the workforce investment system maintain a sharp focus on the business customer as well as the job seeker. Businesses can access business resources centers within the One-Stop and find the information they need to help them maintain a competitive position, grow, and provide the needed jobs. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- The concern is: how do we make the system better? First, when it comes to economic development, WIA speaks of prohibitions of economic development and employment generating activity. In central California, we have had double-digit unemployment rates for years. It is critical that we have the opportunity to help create jobs. Economic development people will tell you they don't create jobs, businesses do. Under WIA, we have an opportunity to work with businesses and conduct outreach. We suggest that a waiver policy be established so that when it comes to engaging or the desire to engage in economic development or employment generating activities, we will have an opportunity to be heard on the matter. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*

Flexibility and Concerns Regarding Funding

- The flexibility provided for states under TANF should be modeled by DOL. Consolidation of DOL funded employment and training programs into block grants could enable states to move funds between programs into areas that need it. As demands shift, funds could be shifted. One example of success regarding flexible funding occurred when TANF funded five jobs developers in the employment security division. As case loads went down, TANF was able to shift funds into case management for people who had more barriers to services. That flexibility does not exist within WIA. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Local WIBs should have the authority to administer all local training and employment programs in order to serve the employers directly. Cost allocation should be examined. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The de-categorization of funds should be encouraged to allow local creativity and flexibility to allow either TANF or WIA to pay for training and career advancement services. *Workforce Development Director*
- Funding and performance outcomes from WIA discourage investments in training the agricultural workforce and should be revised. Local WIBs would not be able to meet their state and federally mandated performance outcomes as they are currently written if they focus on training farm workers to do more of those kind of jobs. Programs in their area tend to focus on encouraging people to leave the agriculture sector. This is a detriment to employers. One way to resolve this is to give state and Local WIBs more

flexibility to invest in seasonal work if it is a major part of the local economy. *Training Provider*

- We view career centers as the foundation of workforce development in the community. Mandatory partners and their financial contributions are one of the main problems. Our recommendations include re-evaluating the existing formula. It is an antiquated approach that is driven more to a social service driven system rather to a universal access system. We would also support accommodations being made to the high-cost areas of the country. Real estate costs are high and a disproportionate amount of funding goes to infrastructure and keeping the centers open. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Funding should have few rules but greater expectations. With reauthorization, we have the opportunity to improve the outcomes and the ability of states to support moving toward the goals. *State Level Secondary Education Partner*
- There is not enough money to support the One-Stop infrastructure and systems building. We recommend utilizing the Reed Act funds to modify this. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- California AFL-CIO continues to be concerned about the funding of workforce development programs, especially for training opportunities that lift people out of poverty-wage jobs. *Union Representative*
- The agricultural sector requires more spending on workforce investment. Through workforce development, the agricultural sector and rural communities can be strengthened. Job skills training can allow farm workers to work more throughout the year at higher wages and enable them to increase the quality and consistency of the agricultural produce, which translates into greater profits for growers. *Training Provider*
- A program in Los Angeles County called BRIDGES helps bridge the transition from Welfare-to-Work. Collaboration between the necessary agencies is difficult and time consuming. Providing incentives to collaborate would help bring agencies together. One of the biggest barriers to collaboration is the present cost allocation structure. There is a lack of understanding and inconsistencies in the interpretation of cost allocation requirements. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Youth)*
- Specialized services are provided by local agencies, not the Department of Public and Social Services. This point should be remembered when considering funding cutbacks supposedly used for DPSS programs. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- Funding from the federal level for the Workforce Investment System needs to increase. The Department of Labor should consider using some of the Reed Act funds to build One-Stop infrastructure in the state. *Local Workforce Association Staff*

Comments Regarding Workforce Investment Boards' Role and Membership

- State and Local Board membership requirements should be more flexible. Washington workforce Boards have had difficulty in meeting the requirements for Board membership, and believe the law should be amended to grant states and local areas greater flexibility in having Board membership that meets their needs while still requiring a private sector majority and requiring input from all the stakeholders. According to the way the Department of Labor has interpreted the law, any currently existing body that wishes to change itself to respond to local or state needs cannot do so. If the organization had been grandfathered in, it is almost ossified. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- There needs to be increased dialogue among Indian grantees and tribes regarding some of the roles of the State WIB, Governor and state WIA agencies. The Los Angeles County WIB has not acknowledged the Southern California Indian Center as an Indian grantee under section 166, although the city and other agencies have done so. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*

General Comments Regarding Flexibility and Governance

- Believe it is possible to obtain more local governance and flexibility by focusing on outcomes rather than process, and by de-categorizing funding. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Based on our experience in Washington, current WIA and TANF laws provide flexibility with a minimum of prescriptive regulations, and they should be preserved. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*
- TANF and WIA have been successful because of the flexibility granted to states through existing laws. Employment and training outcomes, wage progression, using UI wage records, and customer satisfaction have been a strategic part of all of these programs. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*
- WIA's local flexibility enables success. It promotes an effective use of resources, reduces redundancy, and provides public access. It enhances communication and networking of programs outside of the WIA and enriches the community. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- There is no single point of authority or responsibility at the state and federal levels. State and federal organizations provide conflicting information and inconsistencies exist within the agencies and the rules. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The system requires more federal and state guidance at the local levels than exists currently, particularly because the federal partners are all federally funded, and guidance would be useful. This does not necessarily mean local providers should give up local

control and flexibility. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs)*

- Flexibility is needed in partners' authorizing legislation to require One-Stop investment and to serve the employers directly. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- In TANF, increased flexibility and encouragement in education and training should be promoted as the welfare bill is reauthorized. *Workforce Development Director*
- At local levels, the 12 local workforce development council partners are the voice of their communities' needs and resources. Customer service is the focus of all partnerships: the system links employers and job seekers. As a result of these linkages, we have been able to accommodate new initiatives and opportunities. Two examples of this are the Work-Flex program, which assists TANF recipients in wage progression, and the Job Hunter programs, an automated job hunter referral system and a series of job search workshops. Both programs have received national recognition. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*
- For program participants, a lack of regional structures results in inconsistent or duplicative, fragmented services. For example, community colleges are often working with multiple Local WIBs in their regions and report extreme differences. In contrast, community colleges practice regional cooperation in a number of ways, from regional coordinating groups to program authorization and delivery that's handled at the regional level. Students have choice, easy access, and affordable classes. *Public Postsecondary Education*
- The State of Washington has an interest in straightening out performance accountability and we want common core indicators. These indicators can be identified either with the assistance of the federal government or through granting the states the flexibility to apply core indicators across programs if they already have them. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*

III. Linking WIA with TANF and other Partner Programs

Partnership

- A GAO report indicates that coordination between TANF and WIA programs is increasing, but challenges remain. When the welfare reform law was passed, states were provided the flexibility to take reform programs to even greater strides. Work participation rates and performance bonuses added strong incentives for welfare programs across the country to transform from cash assistance to supportive services and employability centers. When WIA was passed two years later, it served to compliment welfare agencies reform efforts in employment and training. However, by the time WIA was implemented and One-Stop centers were established, TANF was maturing and had

established employment and training and job retention strategies. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*

- With regards to TANF and WIA, a few recommendations: develop compatible program definitions for both, focus on employment outcomes, require information sharing across systems, encourage co-enrollment, assign the workforce development system as the connection to the business community, and change the restrictive WIA eligibility requirements for employed workers so that local areas can provide customized training to improve skills. A career ladder fund should be advanced to enable low-wage workers to upgrade their skills while demonstrating effective practices for serving. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The concept of mandatory partners is flawed. TANF should not be a mandatory partner in the One-Stop centers. Partnerships are formed based on shared vision, common objectives, and mutual trust, and partners should be able to figure it out themselves. The current system of different reporting requirements for various programs is an obstacle to good partnerships. There are eligibility and reporting inconsistencies even within DOL funding streams such as the dislocated worker program. Without improving the alignment of WIA and related programs, center staff will continue to compete for credit for services provided. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Partnerships are the cornerstone for making any program successful. As the Commissioner of the Workforce Operations Agency, I have participated in several activities that reflect success in partnerships at both the state and the local level. For instance, in 1997, Governor Gary Locke formed the four-agency state partnerships to attain TANF goals. The four partners are the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, the State Board of Technical and Community Colleges, the Office of Trade and Economic Development, and the Employment Security Department. These partnerships lead to the successful coordination of TANF and WIA. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Some commonality in the reporting structure should also be looked at. Need to find a way to recognize that not every client that comes into a One-Stop is WIA eligible. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Common definitions and outcome measures will be key to improving linkages between TANF and WIA. This Board would like to see the WIB maintain their focus on the hard-to-serve population through the application of Welfare-to-Work grants. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Stay the course. Do not let TANF and WIA become so similar they lose their own goals. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Welfare-to-Work authority is not currently integrated in TANF and WIA reorganization. We talk about reauthorizing, but where are the monies that follow? WIA and TANF should compliment each other. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*

- Programs and fiscal definitions are inconsistent. Other than WIA and Welfare-to-Work, there are different definitions of program and administrative costs. For instance, there is no single definition of job placement or job placement rate. Extend the conforming cost definitions in WIA and Welfare-to-Work to all other partner programs. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- TANF representatives should be a part of all WIBs, One-Stops, and Youth Councils. The focus should be on the whole family, not just adults. TANF and WIA should be aligned to ensure that more education and training be made available to TANF families. Otherwise long-term economic stability will never be reached. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Youth)*
- Among the 18 mandated partners in California, some lack language in their implementing legislation that calls for them to be partners. It would be useful to develop common language in the legislation to improve that situation. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- Partners continue to come to the table. However, the states and national office should flex more muscle to get more partners to provide the necessary resources of the system. The lion's share of the infrastructure costs in Fresno County is borne by WIA. The reality is that partners are not bringing cash to the table. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Rules and policies are barriers to local program integrations with One-Stop. Partner agencies interpret rules differently. For instance, the state Department of Rehabilitation will not participate in a workshop unless it is guaranteed that all attendees are listed as having disabilities. EDD is also reluctant to provide candidate job screenings for employers. One solution is that Local WIBs should have all authority for training and employment programs at the local level. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Systems do not talk to each other. There is no mechanism or authority for collecting partner data in the One-Stop. There is no common Information Technology language in the system. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Organized Labor should have an increased role within the Workforce Development System. On the WIBs, Labor presents the concerns of working people and needs full representation on the WIBs in order to balance the voice of workers with that of employers. *Union Representative*
- WIA should provide incentives for WIA-funded agencies to collaborate with other stakeholders. So far, the collaboration has not yet materialized. The Workforce Development System should include career preparation that includes middle school exploration and continues with work-based learning during high school and post-graduation. Connect academic learning with workforce development. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Youth)*

- Partners on Local WIBs are stretched thinly to sit on Boards and committees, and One-Stop agencies. Their dollars do not stretch enough in the area of training. Need to address training dollars, especially for individual training accounts. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- Approach making TANF mandatory partners with WIA Boards with caution. Remember that there are tribal TANF programs throughout the US. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- I encourage an increased role of the local agency in determining funding recipients. Many of the clients are both battered women and non-custodial parents, and therefore require better coordination between the WIBs, the One-Stops, and the rest of the social support network. Many clients have problems beyond that of obtaining a job that need to be solved. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- Local WIBs around the state have made incredible progress in the last two years of implementation. They have reached out to community partners and created linkages with community colleges, school systems, welfare departments, and private industry. They have also brought those resources into the One-Stops to a great degree. *Local Workforce Association Representative*
- One of the huge issues in California is the level of partnership from so-called required partners. TANF should be a required partner. Partners are not required to do much but show up at the table, however, required partners should be required to provide financial resources. *Local Workforce Association Representative*
- There are inconsistent reporting requirements and a lack of universal standard requirements. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The functional integration of services and service providers as opposed to co-location plays a large role in the success of WIA. Customers have access to a full array of services. One-Stop staff, regardless of agency affiliation, can provide information on all available services. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*
- There has been zero consultation with Native Americans with regards to proposed changes to WIA and TANF. Indeed, the request for comments on WIA Reauthorization focuses on the relationship between state and local governments. These comments do not apply to the application of these programs within tribal governments. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*

Education as Partner

- Education should be a full-scale partner across the board. The largest and most fundamental of all workforce development systems is public education, including K-12

and post-secondary education. Basic academic study of students provides the foundation for their entire life and their ability to be successful and learn specific skills. These institutions make up a huge proportion of the training facilities available to workers under the Training and Education Act. Yet WIA believes that the law does not sufficiently ensure the role of all educational institutions in the shaping of WIA policies and programs. The law should specifically require representation of the school system, especially on the K through 12 level and post-secondary level and adult schools, and community colleges. The California State Board has created a Youth Council with considerable education representation. *State Level Secondary Education Partner*

- The Regional Workforce Preparation and Economic Development Act links education and workforce preparation to economic development to build a truly comprehensive system of workforce development. *State Level Secondary Education Partner*
- Community colleges possess persuasive data on student outcomes, including TANF recipients. *Public Postsecondary Education Partner*
- Current WIA rules inhibit participation. In California, only 35 of the 108 community colleges are on the ETPL and they only offer a handful of programs. This is a major loss of opportunity. *Public Postsecondary Education Partner*
- We welcome the education system to contribute to the workforce system. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Education is the foundation for success of any Workforce Development System. Public education makes up the largest proportion of training and education in this state, often providing services for free or at a low cost. WIA should require representation from all levels of the K-12 education system, including adult schools and county offices of education. One or two representatives on a Board cannot represent the various interests of local education agencies. Education should be mandated as a partner on local youth councils. Decisions about youth should not be made without adequate K-12 representation. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Youth)*
- Education and training components of TANF should be a mandatory partner under WIA. The comprehensive One-Stop system is headed in the correct direction for employment and training programs, which include TANF. The construction of a new One-Stop System has not been smooth. WIA requires vertical and horizontal integration across programs. The true collaboration of partnership is necessary between the local, state, and federal levels. Two examples of areas where this collaboration is necessary are confidentiality and resource sharing. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers)*

Job Retention and Advancement

- The community college board of governors has adopted a career ladder strategy that focuses on offering the long-term skills in career development necessary to succeed in a

high-performance workplace. This is not a work-first philosophy, but instead focuses on the concept of step-up life-long learning strategy. This strategy aims to move workers up the ladder and thus creates more first-step footholds for first time workers. *Public Postsecondary Education Partner*

- Language in applying provisions in the reauthorized WIA should address the need to analyze and provide customer information about jobs in key sectors of the economy, wages, and careers advancement opportunities. *Workforce Development Director*
- We are developing an Integrated Employment Case Management System called SKIES. TANF case management information needed for an employment activity will be available to all One-Stops, community colleges, etc. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*

UI/ES Reform

- Universal access, balanced by the understanding that one size does not fit all, is well established in our TANF and One-Stop operations. TANF clients already have access to core services at the One-Stop centers. In addition, Employment Security staff also provide services within the Department of Social and Health Services. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*

Access to Other Supports

- Must not view youth programs as a vehicle to help families get off welfare, but as a program to help keep young people from going on welfare themselves. This means a continued focus on results, academic achievement, job-readiness, and skill development. It also means a better integration of the school-to-career programs or others that emphasize work-based learning, internships, and skill development programs. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Continue coordination, infrastructure improvement, and integration efforts. There have been coordination challenges with the One-Stops and with the Department of Public and Social Services. This is primarily attributable to an inconsistent knowledge of the needs of battered women who need welfare-to-work services in order go back to work. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*

IV. One-Stop Career Centers

- One-Stops should be granted the ability to increase coordination in order to better serve customers and keep them from being shifted around between services. Language reflecting this increased coordination should be incorporated into several federal pieces. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*

- One-Stop regulations do not generally allow personal questions to be asked of customers who come into the centers. However, some customers need counseling before they can hold down a job. One visit to a counselor is not enough for many people. A minimum of three weeks of mentoring is often needed. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- The One-Stop System needs to be publicized in order to use it efficiently. People need to be aware of what the government offers. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- One-Stop Centers should expand eligibility to all needy people in separate programs. One-Stops should provide counseling and training to all individuals who come in. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- One-Stop Centers should take surveys on people who have been looking for work for a long time and perhaps work with them on a one-on-one basis instead of lumping them with everyone else. Also, people need emergency funding. Sometimes they need food and bus fare. *One-Stop Center User*
- WIA provides ineffective services to targeted workers in the areas of staff-assisted job development, staff-assisted job search, and staff-assisted job placement. The city has been non-responsive to change or enforcement of the WIA contracts with the individual contractors. In many cases, One-Stop staffs are highly unqualified and unwilling to meet the needs of customers. *Community Representative*
- A lot of people need to work now, and the One-Stop Centers do not seem to be doing what they are supposed to be doing. For example, I am bi-lingual, have diverse skills in apartment and retail management, have chaired organizations for fundraising, have recruited hundreds and trained volunteers, have taught secretarial science, and have done small stage musical and video production. I have attended a One-Stop Center for the last two years, and these visits have resulted only in offers of seasonal work at a pay of \$7.50 an hour, many jobs which only lasted about three weeks. *One-Stop Center User*
- One center has a huge room of computers and HP printers that goes to waste because no one uses the facility. None of the employees at the One-Stop are Microsoft certified, and customers feel as though they are infringing on the staff's time by asking for help. It might be worth training people in real estate and apartment management, and other fields in which people may be seeking work, in addition to providing training in computers. *One-Stop Center User*

V. Unemployment Insurance/Employment Service Reform and the One-Stop System

- WIA has made the Workforce Development System more relevant and inclusive by mandating a service delivery system that is universally accessible by all citizens, regardless of socio-economic status. *Local Workforce Investment Board Member*

VI. Improved Opportunities for Training

- Education reform should be based on rigorous standards, assessments of student achievement, and holding systems accountable for student's success. The flexibility and accountability that is built into WIA is good and is the right direction for these programs to be going. *State Level Secondary Education Partner*
- There are problems with WIA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), despite the heavy investment made in them. The City of Los Angeles has invested about \$14 million in WIA ITAs. As of March 19, 2002, 945 people had completed the training, 321 had been placed. In the adult program, individuals who have completed training have seen a wage gain of \$0.22 while the ones who dropped out have seen a \$4.00 wage gain. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The training provided through WIA is currently not responsive to employers. Training takes too long and fails to yield results for the employees and employers. In LA City, 90% of businesses are small and the 50% customers-training requirement is a problem for them. WIA reauthorization should address training needs from a business perspective. More resources need to be provided for training, maximum flexibility granted to the local area, permission given to local businesses to waive the 50% match, and businesses should be given the ability to select from a variety of trainers, not just job seekers. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- She is concerned with the emphasis on work-first. This ignores the needs for workers in our state to find quality jobs. In order to get training, a worker must first demonstrate that she cannot find a job without additional training. However, many must take a job in order to support their families. This restricts their eligibility to receive training. Individuals cannot use an ITA while employed. This system keeps people in low-paying, dead-end jobs. Often these individuals continue to depend on public support simply to meet their basic needs. *Union Representative*
- Need to find a way to expand training opportunities under WIA. Under the current situation, funding is spent on job search, assessment, and counseling services, all of which are important. However, in many areas, the majority of the funds are used to build and maintain infrastructure. Local areas are not able to meet the training needs they identify as essential to workforce development. Also, because of the work-first emphasis, workers are not being directed to training when they really need it. Would like to see local areas determine appropriate service for each job seeker and provide services immediately. *Union Representative*
- Workers should be defined as the principle customer of the system, not just business. The goal of training should be to create a skilled labor force and allow workers to experience continued job opportunity and life-long career development. Training for the short-term needs of business does not meet the long-term needs of citizens or our economy. *Union Representative*

- Incentives that encourage states to keep from providing training to agricultural workers in an effort to get people to stay in agriculture should be removed or modified. The historical lack of investment in the development of the agricultural workforce not only harms workers, but is detrimental to businesses in that sector. In the rural areas where agriculture dominates the environment, they experience unacceptable rates of poverty and joblessness. For instance, in Kirin County, unemployment is at 13.6%, more than double the state average. Within that county, some communities have unemployment rates that double or even triple that. Many of these rural communities are dominated by Latino farmworkers. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers)*
- Provisions in the reauthorization of WIA should reduce the barriers to the financing of training and the number of steps to needed access training. *State Workforce Investment Board Member*

Youth Programs

- The youth programs under WIA deal with children aged 14 to 22. But as the focus of WIA is workforce investment, it is important to recognize that the best place to invest is in the people who will run the future. The possibility of lowering the age limit in order to start working with youth earlier should be examined. Workforce investment is a risk. One thing that should be considered is whether some funding for adult programs would be better used in funding for youth programs in an attempt to obtain a long-term gain rather than a short-term solution. Encourage looking at ways to get federally funded youth programs to come together in a way similar to the One-Stop. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- WIA should require that all WIA-funded youth projects support academic achievements of local schools. There has been little alignment between local schools and WIA-funded youth service providers. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization (Youth)*
- WIA has helped a lot of people in the City of Los Angeles. However, changes are needed to fix the Youth Program eligibility requirements. Some suggestions include allowing cross-program eligibility, enabling sharing of information across agencies, and aligning WIA guidelines with those of other federal agencies. In addition, WIA should maintain the ten Youth Program elements, retain local flexibility but improve definition of state roles, and improve coordination between agencies to the process of disseminating information. Youth Programs should continue their focus on out-of-school youth. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- Geographical boundary restrictions increase the complexity of enrolling youth into programs. In addition, some agencies adjust their numbers in order to make eligibility in enrolling youth into programs more difficult. Some agencies change numbers rather than delivery quality service. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*

VII. Other

Performance Measures

- Performance measures should be examined and reworked to address the needs of business. Federal regulations regarding performance do not make sense to business. If a business wanted to select a local center to assist them, they would check the website for information on what the federal measures showed. There they would find that the most recent reporting period is from July 2000 to June 2001, with data from October 1999 to September 2001, which does not address what is currently happening. Performance measures should include real-time, meaningful information. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- There are no measures for universal access and no measures for leveraging funds. In other words, if a center is doing a really good job of bringing in partners and leveraging money, outsiders cannot observe the success. They only see a distorted picture about what is happening. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- Approve the technical amendments as proposed in the year immediately following WIA, including making the school lunch program a criteria for serving youth. *State Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- There are inconsistent performance emphases and definitions of success. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- The complexity of performance reporting should be reduced. Some of the performance measures make things difficult to report. In particular, youth reporting measures are unusual in that they do not demonstrate that it sometimes takes longer than a year or two to prepare the youth for jobs. Counseling may be needed, and domestic situations may limit an individual's opportunities for getting and keeping a job. *Representative of One-Stop Partner Organization*
- The concept of Universal Services has worked. One-Stops around California have seen a huge increase in traffic. However, performance measures do not measure how folks are served, how many have obtained jobs, or how well workers are doing in the economy. Yet there are incredible resources available to help people. *Local Workforce Association Staff*

TANF Reauthorization

- A thorough evaluation of WIA is premature at this time. Implicit in the DOL question of using WIA One-Stop centers to enhance services for TANF recipients is the fundamental shift that needs to occur in TANF. The President has said that WIA should focus on business first. I believe the agendas of both WIA and TANF need to be merged to maximize the effectiveness of each. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*

- The name of TANF should be changed to “Families First Career Initiative.” Strong families enable people to become effective workers. TANF must support President Bush’s work-first agenda. Fragmentation of the current system has not met the needs of employers. The Workforce System created under WIA has developed the infrastructure and business leadership to develop effective skills training. Closing the skills gap is essential to the success of the American economy. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*
- TANF Reauthorization can accomplish the following things: create incentives for skills acquisition, focus on demand occupations and what employers need; create a new culture for TANF youth by investing in them and promoting family responsibility; create incentives to invest in programs that promote family responsibility for non-custodial parents and enable them to continue to meet family obligations after non-custodial parents begin to earn wages; support a system that encourages a single access point for receiving or being informed of a full array of services; fully fund supportive services to enable families to survive and thrive while they retain and regain employment skills; enable national demonstration grants to support the development and enhancement of local models that connect systems; and include technical amendments to both WIA and TANF to promote integration of programs to provide waivers on privacy regulations, uniform definitions, flexible training fund accounts, and reporting instructions. *Local Workforce Investment Board Staff*

Sector Initiatives

- The Department of Labor should actively work to expand the use of sector initiatives within WIA and TANF, utilizing the demonstration, national technical assistance, and planning provisions in the law to do so. *Workforce Development Director*

Infrastructure

- WIA and TANF programs work well in areas where there is a job market, but not so well in remote areas. Through no fault of their own, many Native Americans have been relegated to the worst and most remote land bases in America. There is no employability or industry in these remote areas. *Representative of Local Association*
- WIA is a wonderful initiative, but for areas that do not have infrastructure or industry, developing additional mandates will be catastrophic. They request some consultation with Native Americans so they can join in the collaboration of making WIA and TANF actually develop into working programs in America. They system should wean people from subsistence programs and get them into gainful employment. *Representative of Local Association*